

Pentecost 9th June 2019 **Whole life worship and the Spirit** Acts 2:1-8, 11b-21 John 14:8-17 Chelsey

Acts 2 ¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?' ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language ...

... ^{11b} – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ "In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit
in those days, and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

John 14 ⁸ Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.'

⁹ Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

¹⁵ 'If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever – ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Whole-life worship – Our focus this term: *a central meeting (2 services/ sermons, 3-4 weeks home-group studies – leads us to this question...*

How is it possible for ordinary people like us to become whole-life worshippers? After all we are talking about the transformation of our *whole lives*. And we are human and weak and we know when we make resolutions, like at New Year, we are usually only able to keep them for a pathetic amount of time. So easily - and usually so quickly - we relapse.

So how *can* we become whole-life worshippers? Viz what happened to the disciples at Pentecost. Slow to believe or even understand, slow to change – *how many times did Jesus – frustrated - find himself saying to them: 'O ye of little faith'*; they were quick to grumble, criticize, argue... quick to run away.

But after Pentecost, everything was changed. Peter, who when challenged by a simple servant girl, had denied even knowing Jesus, now stands up in the middle of Jerusalem before a huge crowd which he clearly believed included a good number of the mob that only a few weeks ago had bayed for Jesus' crucifixion, and which also no doubt included some of the religious leaders who were lethally hostile to Christ and his followers. Peter boldly and courageously proclaims not only the resurrection of Jesus, but the Lordship of Jesus and the widespread need for the crowd to repent of their wicked ways!

In the weeks and months and years to come, all the disciples would continue to proclaim the resurrection and message of Jesus despite threats of stoning, lynching, imprisonment or execution. They were so transformed and committed, that by the end of their lives (usually lives shortened by martyrdom) they had turned the whole of the Roman world upside down with their message of Christ – or as some put it, they actually turned the world the right way up !

What can we learn from that first Pentecost about how *we* might be transformed in a similar way?

- **The Spirit comes to those who long for him**

- Jesus had told them to wait

⁴ 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

- We know that after the Ascension the disciples returned to the upper room in Jerusalem and Luke tells us: *Acts 1 ¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.*

Presumably they were praying for the Holy Spirit to come,

The disciples knew they could do nothing without receiving power from on high - much less be witnesses for Jesus

- It is surely significant that the Spirit came in power when *they were all together in one place*. It seems like any father, God loves to see his children doing things together.

- **The Spirit brings a new understanding**

- *declaring the wonders of God – what were those wonders?*

Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost gives us some clues: that God had finally sent the long-awaited Messiah. He was Jesus of Nazareth and he had proved that he was indeed the Messiah by his wonderful teaching and healing ministry and above all, by being raised from the dead.

Moreover, they knew Jesus had ascended to the place of all authority and power as Lord of Lords, at God's right hand, because he had promised that when that happened, he would send his Holy Spirit and that very morning the Spirit had been poured out on them in spades.

- Peter suddenly seems to have a deep understanding of the Old Testament and how it applies to him and the disciples and the people around them in the here and now. He preaches to the crowd how what they are seeing is a fulfilment of God's promises through Prophet Joel. Later he shows a new understanding of Psalm 16 and then Psalm 110. All of a sudden, the ancient scriptures are coming alive for Peter: they are relevant and powerful in a new way.

- Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the *Spirit of truth*, who will lead the disciples into all truth and remind them of everything Jesus had taught. As we have been reminded in recent weeks, Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well that *true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks*.

It's important in our worship we have both *Revelation* and *Response*. Sometimes we leap straight into *response* – telling God how much we love Him – without first reminding ourselves what we are responding to! Our worship needs to remind us who God is and what he has done before we express our response of love, or repentance or service.

This may be done through the words of the songs, or scripture or the sermon or through liturgy.

- **The Spirit brings joy and praise**

- *they were 'drunk' with joy*

¹³ Some... said, 'They have had too much wine.' ...Peter: ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

The Spirit not only brought the disciples new understanding to their minds but He brought home the reality of what this meant for them to their hearts. This is why they were so filled with praise and joy that to the cynics they appeared drunk – unable to keep quiet, laughing, exclaiming

- This affected **all** of them. *All of them were filled and began to speak*.

When you hear good news, it is very hard to keep quiet about it – you have to tell someone or maybe even *everyone* that you meet. This was certainly true for the disciples. None of them could keep quiet about the wonderful fact that Jesus had been raised to life and declared by God himself to be Lord of Lords as evidenced by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This leads us to how...

- **The Spirit enables witness**

- The disciples were completely transformed: He enabled them to communicate with those who were there. The Spirit literally gave them the words to speak. Whether it was the simple words of praise that people understood in their own language, or Peter expounding to his Jewish religious audience their own Scriptures (our OT).

When we try and tell others about Jesus in our own strength we often feel completely tongue-tied.

However, if we invite the Spirit, often he gives us the words, the stories, the way-in to share our faith.

- He gave them great courage and boldness: as I said at the beginning when Peter addressed the crowds at Pentecost, he must have known that it would include many who had help ensure that Jesus was put to death a few weeks before. But despite this he spoke with great boldness, directness and freedom. Sometime later when Peter and John were imprisoned for preaching the gospel, they were commanded the next day by the religious leaders, the Sanhedrin to stop preaching. Even though Peter and John must have been all too aware of the danger of being crucified like Jesus, or stoned to death like Stephen a short while later, their response was ‘We cannot help speaking of what we have seen and heard.’ The Spirit had made the wonderful truth of the gospel and who Jesus was so real to them, they simply were incapable of keeping quiet about it.

So if we want to be whole-life worshippers, we need to join with the disciples when we are on our own and when we worship together in that earnest prayer from the heart: *Veni Sancti Spiritu – Come, Holy Spirit.*